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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Feldman DATE TYPED 02/02/05 HB _____

SHORT TITLE Higher Education Pre-Dental Clubs SB 237

ANALYST Woods

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY05	FY06	FY05	FY06		
	\$50.0			Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to the appropriation for the New Mexico Commission on Higher Education in the General Appropriations Act.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

New Mexico Department of Health (DOH)
New Mexico State Health Policy Commission (HPC)

Responses Not Received From

New Mexico Commission on Higher Education (CHE)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 237 – Making an Appropriation to Establish a Program of Pre-Dental Clubs at a New Mexico Institution of Higher Education to Promote Increased Numbers of New Mexicans in the Dental Profession – appropriates \$50,000 from the general fund to the Commission on Higher Education for expenditure in FY06 to fund a half-time faculty member at an institution of higher learning in New Mexico to administer pre-dental clubs to foster better preparedness of New Mexico students competing for entry to dental schools. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY06 shall revert to the general fund.

Significant Issues

DOH indicates that New Mexico has no dental school and is currently experiencing a shortage of dentists. Further, the Governor's Oral Health Council (GOHC) recently submitted recommendations regarding workforce development to Governor Richardson. The GOHC workforce committee recommended that pre-dental clubs be established at all institutions of higher learning throughout the State. Pre-dental clubs would have the ability to provide career counseling and mentorship programs.

HPC indicates that New Mexico has traditionally been severely underserved in oral health. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) reports:

- There were 616 dentists, 560 dental hygienists, and 1,520 dental assistants practicing in New Mexico in 2000. There were 33.8 dentists per 100,000 population in New Mexico in 2000, well below the national rate of 63.6. New Mexico ranked 49th in the nation in dentists per capita. The per capita ratio of dental hygienists was also below the national rate.
- The number of dentists in New Mexico increased 2 percent between 1991 and 2000 while the state's population grew 18 percent. The result was a 13 percent decline in dentists per capita, in contrast to a 16 percent increase nationwide.

HPC indicates that pre-dental clubs have been shown to increase interest in entering the field of dentistry, and give students a better opportunity for admission to dental schools. As reported at the Dental Education Summit, faculty recruited to administer pre-dental clubs can serve a mentoring function, as well as help to develop pre-dental coursework that would enhance New Mexico students' ability to enroll and excel in dental school. Pre-dental clubs would also provide career counseling. Further, HPC suggests that the University of Utah provides a good example of the success of pre-dental clubs: as reported at the dental summit, Utah had 127 students enrolled in dental school for 2002, while New Mexico had only nineteen.

DOH notes that House Memorial 1, Dental Education Summit Final Report and Recommendations, October 1, 2003, submitted by the Health Policy Commission, also recommended development of active pre-dental clubs at the five colleges that offer baccalaureate degrees.

DOH additionally suggests the proposed appropriation in SB 237 would address the shortage of dentists in New Mexico by funding a half time faculty position dedicated to increasing the number of qualified New Mexico students applying and getting accepted into out-of-state dental schools. Increasing the number New Mexico dental students will increase the number of dentists. This will help improve access to oral health services and reduce oral health disparities, particularly for children.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

DOH observes that the appropriation proposed in SB 237 is consistent with the DOH strategic plan Program Area 9, Strategic Direction: Achieve excellence and accountability in administration and service; Objective 3: Increase the health workforce supply, in collaboration with other entities in New Mexico.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$50,000 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY06 shall revert to the general fund.

This program was not included in the CHE's *2005-2006 Higher Education Funding Recommendation*.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

Bill does not specify which institution of higher learning would be is the recipient of the appropriation.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP OR RELATIONSHIP

Relates to the appropriation for the New Mexico Commission on Higher Education in the General Appropriations Act.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

DOH offers numerous observations with respect to programs designed to address the shortage of oral health professionals in the state:

- New Mexico has 11 slots dedicated to Dentistry with the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (WICHE). This program provides students with a set scholarship amount of \$22,000 per year to use at an out-of-state dental program. Any amount above the scholarship amount becomes the responsibility of the student. The GOHC has recommended increasing the number of slots to 15. The NM Health Service Corps Program offers financial assistance to communities for recruitment and retention of dental professionals and offers stipends to dental students while in school. The University of New Mexico has recently established a General Residency Program to train dentists in Bernalillo County.
- The federal government has designated all or part of 26 New Mexico counties as dental Health Professional Shortage Areas. Dental services are inadequate due to a shortage of needed health professionals -- especially in rural and remote areas of the state. New Mexico is below the national average for the number of dentists to population ratio and is among the five states with the lowest number of dentists per 100,000 population. In 2000, the national dentist-to-population ratio was 58.3 dentists per 100,000. New Mexico has only three counties with 50+ dentists per 100,000 population (Bernalillo, Santa Fe, and Los Alamos counties).
- A 2000 Oral Health Survey conducted by the DOH found that 65 percent of the 2,000 children surveyed had experienced tooth decay; and 37 percent of the sample had untreated tooth decay. NM children suffer from a higher rate of tooth decay, experiencing more decay and having more untreated decay than the US average. Approximately one of four (25 percent) NM adults, age 65 years and older, have lost all their natural teeth. The national target recommended by *Healthy People 2010* is to have no more than 20 percent of adults of this age group with loss of all natural teeth.